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 SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM; IRAN

GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM

## 1. "The canker"

Under the sub-heading "Democrats and a growing number of Republicans are demanding changes at Guantanamo," Jocelyn Coulon, a guest researcher at the University of Montreal's Study Group on International Security wrote in the centrist La Presse (6/22): "The American army base at Guantanamo is a canker in more ways than one.... It has come to embody the most abject practices of the 'war on terror'.... Following the attacks of September 11, 2001, the Bush administration took the gloves off in its treatment of suspected terrorists.... Government lawyers opposed to [the new] measures were excluded and an entire legal argument was constructed to justify the unimaginable.... In such a state of moral and legal decay a criminal drift was unavoidable.... It resulted in the death of approximately 100 people held by American soldiers and CIA agents, a network of secret prisons all over the world where individuals are held and interrogated without any independent supervision, and the sub-

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contracting of torture to rogue States.... War, guerrilla warfare, war on terror always lead us into unknown territory. There are moral and legal imperatives to uphold and exceptional situations during which they can be suspended. Guantanamo, secret prisons and abuse are no longer the exception but are becoming the norm. Former President and Nobel Peace Prize winner Jimmy Carter proposed the closing of Guantanamo and of all secret prisons, a ban on detaining individuals incommunicado, an end to the transfer of detainees to countries where torture is used, and the creation of a commission to investigate facilities where suspected terrorists are being held by Americans. Without putting into question the vigilance with which the war on terror needs to be fought, this seems like a program that could please everyone."

## IRAN

2. "Iran vote a sham or a signal?"

Foreign affairs columnist Marcus Gee queried in the leading Globe and Mail (6/22): "Is democracy breaking out in Iran? After all the bustle of its recent presidential election campaign, it was tempting to think so.... The trouble is, none of it really mattered. The president of Iran does not run the country. Iranians learned that to their sorrow when they elected Mohammed Khatami by a landslide in 1997, only to see him beat his fists against a wall through two futile terms. The real power lies with the unelected clerics who populate the revolutionary institutions of the Islamic state. The Guardian Council, dominated by Islamic hard-liners, has the power to veto legislation and disqualify candidates for office.... In most Middle Eastern autocracies, the regime holds sham elections for powerful offices. In Iran, notes Middle East scholar Patrick Clawson, the regime holds a real election for a powerless post. But even if the winner's power is limited, the fact that all of the candidates tried so hard to distance themselves from the revolutionary past is a sign of changing times.... Moderates and liberal-minded students are now rallying to Mr. Rafsanjani, judging him the lesser of evils. It's a sad comedown for the reform movement. A victory for Mr. Ahmadinejad on Friday would consolidate the power of the hard-liners, who would control not just the key revolutionary institutions such as the Guardian Council, but the institutions such as the Guardian Council, but the parliament and presidency as well. The modest social

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reforms brought in by Mr. Khatami, such as the easing of controls on public dress and behaviour, could be rolled back. But even if Mr. Ahmadinejad wins, he will have to trim his sails to the winds of change in Iran.... The Islamic fervour that fired the 1979 revolution has faded. Iranians now thirst for freedom, pragmatism and normality. Whatever the outcome of Friday's vote, Iran's leaders can't afford to ignore them."

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